

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts



*Roxbury Community College  
Groundbreaking Ceremony*

AUGUST 27, 1985  
12:00 NOON — 2:00 P.M.



ROXBURY CROSSING  
(Corner of New Dudley Street and Columbus Avenue)  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS







*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*  
*Roxbury Community College*  
*625 Huntington Avenue*  
*Boston, Massachusetts 02115*

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## **BUILDING ROXBURY COMMUNITY COLLEGE: The History of a Dream**

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On August 7, 1970, a legislative bill was signed appropriating two and one half million dollars to renovate space in Roxbury for the establishment of a community college. This date marks the culmination of several years of struggle by the school's founders. This date also notes the beginning of an even longer effort to find suitable housing for the institution.

For several years prior to 1970, a group of ad hoc citizens from the greater Roxbury area worked to convince the Massachusetts Board of Regional Community Colleges, the legislature and the Governor of the tremendous need for a higher education program in Roxbury. Although the bill was signed in August 1970 to establish such a program, it was not implemented for some time.

In July 1980, thirty million dollars were added to the two and one half million dollars for the construction of a new campus in the Southwest Corridor. Many obstacles were overcome during the ten years between the 1970 and 1980 appropriation.

In 1971, the proposed site for the college - the old Boston Business School building on Warren Street - was vandalized. So, in September 1973, the Roxbury college opened its doors in temporary quarters to students. At this

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time the administrative offices were located on Washington Street near Dudley Station and the classrooms were at 460 Blue Hill Avenue in Grove Hall. The classroom space was shared with an experimental school and the Model Cities Higher Education Program. A former automobile showroom housed these activities. There was little room for a library or science laboratories and the classrooms were very small.

In December of 1974, the college moved to 424 Dudley Street at the foot of Blue Hill Avenue. This Dudley Street building was previously used as a nursing home and was owned by the Catholic nuns known as "The Little Sisters of the Poor". At Dudley there was room for a library, faculty offices, larger classrooms, and a sizeable kitchen area was converted into biology and chemistry laboratories. The entire college helped to execute the relocation to Dudley Street. The administration rented trucks and the staff and students moved the books, furniture and equipment during the Christmas recess. The Dudley Street facility was more spacious, but was not in very good physical condition; poor wiring and heating at times made it hazardous. Thus the search for an adequate facility to house the college went forward. In the spring of 1975, the school's local Advisory Board recommended that the Regional Board of Community Colleges build a new and permanent campus for Roxbury Community College. This campus was to be located in the neighborhood of Roxbury along the Southwest Corridor. The architectural firm of Stull Associates was authorized to prepare a site evaluation report. The Stull report outlined a schedule for completing the new campus by 1980.

Although the major preliminary planning documents were completed by 1977, conflicts among the various planning constituencies lead to a series

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of delays. The delays and uncertainty surrounding the development of adequate facilities mirrored the general sense of hesitancy and uncertainty about the future existence of the college. The June 1980 passage of a thirty million dollar appropriation came right at the end of serious efforts to merge the school. A second merger proposal was considered in the spring of 1981. Both proposals of merger met with strong and dramatic community opposition. The spirit of united community support for the college helped define a more positive approach to the school's future. This approach was strengthened, when the newly created Board of Regents recommended in June 1981 to build a new campus in the Corridor.

In the spring of 1982 and after a five year delay, the architects of record were authorized to resume planning for a new campus. Preliminary designs for establishing the college were reviewed in the spring of 1983. Neighborhood concerns about the potential displacement of long-time residents and the general impact of the school on the Highland Park environment lead to new designs for how the college would be located on the site.

As plans for the new campus were being developed, the college relocated to its third interim facility. In the summer of 1982, the school moved to 625 Huntington Avenue at the former Boston State College campus. At first Roxbury shared that campus with the University of Massachusetts at Boston. Currently it is shared with the Massachusetts College of Art. The three buildings that now house Roxbury Community College are quite an improvement from the condemned nursing home at Dudley Street. However, there continues to be a shortage of classrooms, and the college still does not have its own auditorium, gymnasium or cafeteria not to mention space for the development of new educational programs. Therefore the buildings

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and equipment to be provided at the new campus in the Corridor continue to be anxiously awaited.

In the summer of 1985 a final appropriation of 7.5 million dollars was approved through special legislation so that the ground breaking for the construction of a new and permanent home for Roxbury Community College could take place in August 1985 and construction could be completed by the end of the summer of 1987. For the 1975 RCC Advisory Board that recommended the construction of a campus in the Southwest Corridor, a dream has been deferred for ten years. For the ad hoc citizens group, who founded the college, a dream has been deferred for about twenty years. The ground-breaking for a college in Roxbury symbolizes the end of long years of waiting by the many who kept watch over the dream; this ceremony also suggests the mending of broken relationships between those individuals and groups who cared in different ways about having higher education in Boston become accessible to all who desire it. The breaking of ground for this college begins the transformation of a dream into reality.



ROXBURY COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
AUGUST 27, 1985  
GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY  
PROGRAM

MUSICAL SELECTIONS

WELCOME.....JOYCE KING, CHAIRPERSON,  
RCC BOARD OF TRUSTEES

AFRICAN GROUNDBLESSING CEREMONY.....EVEREST ONOUHA, RCC FACULTY

REMARKS/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....BRUNETTA WOLFMAN,  
PRESIDENT, RCC

KEYNOTE ADDRESS.....GOVERNOR MICHAEL DUKAKIS

REMARKS.....MAYOR RAYMOND FLYNN

REMARKS.....SENATOR ROYAL BOLLING, SR.

REMARKS.....REPRESENTATIVE GLORIA FOX

STUDENT VIEW.....MAYRA VELASQUEZ, STUDENT  
GOVERNMENT PRESIDENT

TRIBUTE TO BETTY JOHNSON.....RUTH BATSON, RCC FOUNDATION

GROUNDBREAKING

RECEPTION IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, THE FOUNDATION, THE ALUMNI, FACULTY AND  
STUDENTS OF ROXBURY COMMUNITY COLLEGE WISH TO THANK EACH OF YOU FOR YOUR  
CONTINUED SUPPORT

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GROUNDBREAKING COMMITTEE

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(Roxbury Community College)

MAYRA VELASQUEZ  
(Student Government President)

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICES AND THE  
MASSACHUSETTS BOARD OF REGENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.